

## Issue 14

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# NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES

*County Government with a Unified Voice!*

## Business Associates Monthly



### Firewise Display Unveiled at Jakes Branch County Park

*By: Donna E. Flynn, Director of Public Information Division*

Nestled in the Pinelands of Ocean County, sits Jakes Branch County Park, on a swath of 400 acres that highlights the natural beauty of the area while blending active and passive recreation.

In June 2002, the same swath of land was the scene of one of Ocean County's largest wildfires consuming 1,200 acres of land, destroying a house and consuming many smaller structures on its path of destruction.

Ocean County officials joined with state Forest Fire Service representatives, county fire service representatives, members of the community and the Ocean County Department of Parks and Recreation to unveil a new exhibit highlighting

the wildfire of 2002 and emphasizing the importance of being prepared for these events in Ocean County.

"This great exhibit was the hard work of many hands," said Ocean County Freeholder John C. Bartlett Jr., liaison to the Ocean County Department of Parks and Recreation. "We are happy today to call it complete and share it with the public that comes to our visitors' center at Jake's Branch County Park."

The exhibit was funded in part by a federal Firewise Grant administered by the New Jersey State Forest Fire Service. Much of the work was done in-house by county

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WELCOMES**

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Columbia, MD  
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#### TouchTone Communications

Kenneth McCormack  
16 South Jefferson Rd.  
Whippany, NJ  
07981



## Nationwide<sup>®</sup> On Your Side

### Fees and Expenses are Key Date When Making Fund Decisions

*By: Kelly Adams, Senior Marketing Analyst*

A mutual fund's fees and expenses may be more important than you realize, the Securities and Exchange Commission warns. Advertisements, rankings, and ratings often emphasize how well a fund has performed in the past. But studies show that the future is often different. In fact, Morningstar<sup>®</sup> recently published a report that concludes:

"If there's anything in the whole world of mutual funds that you can take to the bank, it's that expense ratios help you make a better decision. In every single time period and data point tested, low-cost funds beat high-cost funds."

With just some basic information, you can use a calculator provided online by FINRA to compare the costs of different mutual funds in a matter of seconds. Called the "Fund Analyzer", this tool estimates the value of the funds and impact of fees and expenses on your investment and also allows you the ability to look up applicable fees and available discounts for funds.

The Plan is concerned with participant costs as well. That's why the Plan works hard to keep operational costs reasonable.

For further information contact :  
*David M. Sarmir, Nationwide SRS by  
calling 877-677-3678 x43390.*



## New Jersey Counties Show Dramatic Reversal in Population Growth Patterns

By: Tim Evans, Director of Research

According to 2011 county population estimates released by the Census Bureau, the fastest-growing New Jersey counties between 2008 and 2011, in the wake of the Great Recession, were Hudson (+8.3 percent), Middlesex (+3.7), Union (+3.4), Passaic (+2.8), Bergen (+2.4) and Essex (+2.4).

Surprisingly, this list coincides almost exactly with the list of the most developed counties in the state (Hudson, Union, Essex, Bergen and Middlesex are the five most developed counties, while Passaic ranks 11<sup>th</sup>). In a dramatic reversal of New Jersey's development pattern of the last 50+ years, the last three years have seen the state's most urbanized counties growing the fastest.

In the top three fastest-growing counties from 2000 to 2008 – Gloucester, Ocean and Somerset – average annual population increases dropped dramatically after 2008. Among the 10 fastest pre-recession gainers, only Middlesex – the most urbanized of the 10 – gained more residents on an annual basis between 2008 and 2011 than it had between 2000 and 2008

### Flight to the Exurbs May Be Ending

After nearly 60 years of unrelenting outward suburban expansion from the old industrial urban cores, the future of human settlement in New Jersey – and in the rest of the United States –

Appears as if it might be reshuffling itself once again.

As has been [documented at the national level](#), older, already-urbanized places have been [weathering the economic downturn](#) that began in 2008 better than other places, [particularly the far-flung "exurbs."](#) But the recession may simply have been the catalyst for a comeback for ["walkable urbanism"](#) that had been brewing for a while. In fact, observers (including the [Rutgers Regional Report](#) (pdf) and [New Jersey Future](#)) have previously noted various signs of a [rebound by urban centers](#) and [older, built-out suburbs](#).

The Census Bureau county population figures for 2011 reaffirm, in sometimes dramatic fashion, that the pattern of exurban retreat and walkable urban revitalization is manifesting in New Jersey. It is truly remarkable that the list of the fastest-growing counties over the last three post-recession years is dominated by a group of largely built-out urban and inner-suburban counties. With the exception of Middlesex, the southern half of which is still relatively undeveloped and has grown rapidly in recent decades, none of these counties has found itself near the top of the growth list since the 1940s, when Bergen County last cracked the top 5. In fact, many of them had become accustomed to population losses being as likely as gains, with Hudson, Essex, Bergen and Union counties having all posted population losses in at least two

(Continued on page 5)



*l to r: Kevin McArdle, NJ Radio 101.5FM; Senate President Sweeney; General Assembly Speaker Oliver; Senator Kyrillos; Senator Van Drew; & Assemblyman Amodeo*



*Best Exhibit Display  
Colleen Burns,  
Premier Healthcare Resources*



*l to r: Lenny Eliason, NACo President  
&  
NJAC Executive Committee*



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park staff including the painting of the ceiling to floor mural done by Mary Jane Bavais, the county Superintendent of Recreation.

The Ocean County Department of Parks and Recreation created the interactive guided and self guided firewise exhibit that highlights the Jake’s Branch Wildfire. The exhibit is housed in the Jake’s Branch County Park Interpretive Center, on Double Trouble Road, here.

“From the members of our county staff, to the fire services, this exhibit is a great example of the cooperation agencies have in order to raise awareness and educate the public about wild-fires here in Ocean County,” Bartlett noted. “The park location is within an area that experienced one of New Jersey’s worst wildfires in recent memory.

“In 2002, the Jake’s Branch Fire burned 1,200 acres and destroyed one home,” Bartlett said. “Additional property damage exceeded \$1 million.”

The goal of the exhibit which is called “Firewise Living in the Garden State,” is to educate the public that the Pine Barrens is considered a fire ecosystem and is prone to large and devastating wildfires.

“In addition we would like to inform our citizens how the fires altered the landscape and negatively impact private property,” said Michael Mangum, Director of the Ocean County Department of Parks and Recreation.

The exhibit includes hands-on activities, static displays, outdoor interpretive signs and interactive units.

“This is an exhibit that can be enjoyed by adults and youngsters alike,” said Freeholder Director Gerry P. Little. “I am sure school groups will be visiting the center to see this when the new school year starts in September.”

Bartlett noted that extinguishing the forest fire of 2002 was also a cooperative effort with the assistance of volunteer fire companies from throughout Ocean County working with the state Forest Fire Service.

“After the first dispatch went out by the state Forest Fire Service, the Pinewald Fire Company under the leadership of Chief George Dohn was first on the scene, followed by the Beachwood Fire Company,” Bartlett said. “From those first moments, fire companies responded from around the County to put out a fire that had the potential to do a great deal more damage.

“I want to send the appreciation of the Freeholders to the New Jersey Forest Fire Service and to all those people who participated in this project,” Bartlett said. “I know that forest fire season usually begins in March but we need to be prepared throughout the year.”

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*Scott Kleiger,  
Chief Operating Officer,  
Pothole Killers/Patch Management*



*l. to r. Tricia Dain; Elizabeth Ryan; and  
Jeanine Miles, CFG Health Systems, LLC*



*l. to r. John Donnadio, NJAC Executive Director;  
Jane Lugo, CFO, Atlantic County;  
Richard Gardner, NJAC President,  
Warren County Freeholder*







## Health-Improvement Grants Available to Small Communities

Federal healthy lifestyles grants for small communities are available through the Affordable Care Act's Prevention and Public Health Fund. The Community Transformation Grants—Small Communities Program will award approximately \$70 million to up to 50 communities. Eligible applicants include local governmental agencies. Letters of intent are due June 18, and full applications are due July 31. For more information go to: <http://www.grants.gov/search/>

### Voting Credential Forms Mailed for the 2012 Election

Credentials and voting information for NACO's 2012 election were mailed May 14 to the chief elected official of every member county. To vote, a county must have paid its 2012 dues, have at least one paid registration to the Annual Conference in Allegheny County, Pa. and have proper credentials. The credentials information packet is available online at <http://www.naco.org/about/governed/Pages/ElectionsVotingCredentials.aspx>, where the forms may be downloaded.

### Publication Explores Link Between County Jails, Affordable Care Act

NACO had produced a publication that examines how counties can be involved in enrolling individuals held in county jails who become newly eligible for health insurance coverage in 2014 through the Affordable Care Act. It outlines some of the potential issues and challenges county jail and human services staff may face and also features examples and ideas for developing enrollment strategies and processes. To access the publication go to: [http://www.naco.org/programs/csd/Documents/Health%20Reform%20Implementation/County-Jails-HealthCare\\_WebVersion.pdf](http://www.naco.org/programs/csd/Documents/Health%20Reform%20Implementation/County-Jails-HealthCare_WebVersion.pdf)

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decades since 1950.

The turnaround is nearly as striking in the other direction. Outlying counties like Ocean, Somerset, Gloucester and Hunterdon, which consistently appeared near the top of the growth list in the post-war era, are now seeing their growth rates cool off considerably in the wake of the recession. In some cases, suburban growth has even morphed into actual population losses. Of the six counties that lost population between 2008 and 2011, only one – Camden – is primarily urbanized. The other 2008-2011 population losers – Sussex, Monmouth, Warren, Hunterdon and Salem – are mostly (with maturing Monmouth being something of an exception) lower-density, farther-out bedroom communities, where people generally commute to jobs closer to the urban core. Restricting the analysis just to the last year (2010-2011) changes the picture only slightly; all of these counties except Monmouth still lost population, though at slightly slower rates than between 2008 and 2010.

The reversal becomes most clear when looking at what used to be [New Jersey's real exurban frontier](#) – northeastern Pennsylvania. [Fueled by out-migrants from New York City and New Jersey,](#)

Pike and Monroe counties in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains were the first- and third-fastest growing counties in the entire Northeast in the 1990s (+65 percent and +45 percent growth, respectively), and ranked first and second from 2000 to 2005, far outstripping any New Jersey county in either period. But the last few years have [rewritten the playbook](#): Monroe County grew by only 2.6 percent between 2008 and 2011 and Pike County actually declined by 5.2 percent over the same period.

The flight to the exurbs may be a thing of the past, a casualty of four years of economic stagnation, a [housing market collapse](#), [\\$4-per-gallon gasoline](#) and [Millennials in search of walkable urbanism](#). "[Driving til you qualify](#)" is [no longer a trade-off that makes economic sense](#).

Of course, a slowdown in population growth does not necessarily mean a [slowdown in the rate of land development](#). Large-lot zoning conspires to continue eating up our last open spaces even in the absence of much net population growth (or none at all, as in the cases of [Buffalo](#) and [Pittsburgh](#)). But perhaps the economic reality check delivered by the housing market collapse might serve to put the brakes on that phenomenon as well.



## Mission Statement

NJAC is committed to advocating for legislation, regulations, and policy directives that empower county governments to operate more effectively and efficiently. As a non-partisan organization that represents the only true regional form of government in the State with a unified and proactive voice, NJAC is dedicated to advancing innovative programs and initiatives for the sole purpose of saving valuable taxpayer dollars.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1
4 Legislative Sessions	5	6	7 Legislative Sessions	8
11	12	13 Marina Boat Rental, Mercer Cty.	14 Legislative Sessions	15 Curbing Hunger Month, Somerset Cty.
18 Legislative Sessions	19	20 Pontoon Boat Nature Tour, Mercer Cty.	21 Chair Yoga Demo-Warrenbrook Somerset Cty.	22 Free Movie in the Park, Gloucester Cty.
25 Legislative Sessions	26	27	28 Legislative Sessions	29 Seining at the Bay-shore, Monmouth Cty.

## From the Executive Director's Desk

The New Jersey Association of Counties (NJAC) presented Union County Freeholder Angel Estrada with the "Maurice Fitzgibbons Freeholder of the Year Award" at the Association's 62<sup>nd</sup> annual celebration of county government last week in Atlantic City. The award is named after the long-time Hudson County Freeholder who passed away in December of last year and served as NJAC President in 2001.

"Freeholder Estrada is a tremendous asset to NJAC serving as Chair of the Association's finance committee and member of the personnel committee. His insightful, thoughtful, and solution driven analysis on issues that impact county governments throughout the State is invaluable and I'm honored to present him with this well-deserved award," said NJAC President and Warren County Freeholder Rick Gardner.

NJAC also presented Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney and Senator Joseph M. Kyrillos with "Legislative Leadership" awards; and, Warren County Chief Finance Officer Charles "Pete" Houck, Somerset County Purchasing Official Mary Lou Stanton, Atlantic County Finance Officer Jane Lugo, and Monmouth County Secretary Assistant Linda Keats with "County Service" awards. However, NJAC's first ever "County Vocational-Technical School Cook-Off Challenge" stole the show as culinary arts students from Atlantic, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean, and Warren Counties competed for titles in taste, creativity, and food presentation.

"Congratulations to each of the award winners – especially to our incredibly talented county vocational-technical school students, who worked very hard to prepare outstanding dishes of scallops, shrimp, crawfish, oysters, and pork. It was an enjoyable experience for everyone involved and I look forward to an even bigger competition next year," commented Gardner.

Thanks to all of our sponsors, vendors, and attendees that participated in NJAC's 62<sup>nd</sup> annual celebration of county government last week and we look forward to seeing you soon at upcoming events.



*Union County Freeholder Angel Estrada  
With Wife Teresa*